

Mining the Forum

The APPL tree of knowledge bears fruit once again

YOU MAY RECALL A STORY FROM THE LAST ISSUE ABOUT how *ASK* provided the impetus for two project managers from different NASA centers to come together to solve a problem (See *ASK 10*, “So This is Knowledge Sharing,” by Susan Motil). In this issue, we offer another story about knowledge sharing. This one occurred at the APPL Masters Forum.

Masters Forums, held semi-annually, bring together the best project managers from NASA, other government agencies and private industry for three days of knowledge sharing, mostly in the form of stories. Few *ASK* readers may realize it, but many of the stories we publish originated at the Masters Forum. It makes sense, as *ASK* is only one piece of the Knowledge Sharing Initiative. Perhaps you saw the article in the *Washington Post* (11/29/02) about the interrelatedness of the Knowledge Sharing product line: *ASK*, Masters Forums and Transfer of Wisdom Workshops. (More on the Transfer of Wisdom Workshops next issue.)

In February '02, Roy Malone of Marshall Space Flight Center attended a Masters Forum and heard Judy Stokley, a program director in the Air Force, talk about using some innovative approaches to address a government-mandated drawdown of her workforce. Stokley was able to accomplish the drawdown while finding creative ways to minimize the impact on the people she had to let go. Facing a mandated drawdown at Marshall in his Logistics Department, Malone reflected on what Stokley had done and adapted some of her ideas. The story he wrote for us this issue shows how.

Roy Malone's story, “Thank you, Judy,” is also an important story because it shows the breadth of the APPL Knowledge Sharing Initiative. The Malone story demonstrates how APPL not only facilitates knowledge

sharing within NASA but also across government agencies. One of the hallmarks of the Knowledge Sharing Initiative is the variety of project practitioners who have participated in either the Forum or *ASK*. Those of you familiar only with *ASK* will recognize the space we've given to non-NASA contributors, most notably Terry Little and Scott Cameron.

Along with Malone this issue, we have a story by Judy Stokley, “My Schooling in Leadership.” Several years ago, Stokley enrolled in a class at the Defense Systems Management College and the experience completely changed her thinking about what it means to be a leader. Stokley's story shows that if you approach a learning opportunity with an open mind, you may come home with something better than expected. We hope the same has happened to you by reading *ASK*.

This issue we also have several stories about planning. Here again, there is a Masters Forum connection. At the August 2002 Masters Forum in Tysons Corner, Virginia, we asked some of the best project managers we know to appear on a panel to swap stories about planning. Ken Schwer was one of those panelists, and his story from the Forum appears here. Marty Davis was a member of the panel and his story is here. Terry Little and Scott Cameron's dialogue about how speed impacts a project stemmed from this planning panel at the Masters Forum.

Masters Forums are always a great source of material for *ASK*, and we have struck a rich vein this issue. Hope you enjoy. •

